



CITY OF LAGUNA NIGUEL

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CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Kelly Jennings
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May 8, 2023

The Honorable Assembly Member Holden
Chair of Appropriations Committee, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 972 (Maienschein) Local Assistance and Grant Program Streamlining Workgroup.
Notice of SUPPORT *(As amended March 23, 2023)*

Dear Assembly Member Holden,

The City of Laguna Niguel is pleased to **support** AB 972 (Maienschein), which would coordinate, align, and streamline local government assistance resources to ensure that every community has the same opportunity to compete for state funding opportunities by convening a statewide, cross-agency Local Assistance and Grant Program Streamlining Workgroup, no later than April 2024.

At the state level, local assistance efforts are largely conducted by individual grant programs, and although centrally located via the California State Library's Grants Portal, nearly all state grant programs have unique and widely varied procedures for application and scoring. Further, although best practices for local assistance have been developed and published by the [Strategic Growth Council](#), local assistance efforts are not uniformly conducted across state departments, offices, boards, commissions, and agencies.

Local municipalities often lack the resources, staff capacity, implementation experience, and technical expertise to apply for and secure competitive statewide targeted grant funding. Additionally, like other sectors, California cities are facing staffing shortages, a wave of early retirement, and other workforce stressors on existing municipal staff. Streamlined application processes and robust, uniform local assistance from the state is crucial for cities to effectively access state funding opportunities.

Climate resiliency, natural resources, and environmental quality programs are nearly always funded with a combination of federal, state, and local resources. Cities are left to compete for scarce funding and stack various grant opportunities, which increases the complexity and decreases the likelihood of successfully securing grant program funding.

As a contract City with a small number of employees, the City of Laguna Niguel has a reduced capacity to apply for grant funding administered by the State of California. A uniform, streamlined application process will allow Laguna Niguel to apply for additional grant opportunities while maintaining organizational efficiency.

By aligning procedures of the financing programs under the purview of the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency, AB 972 will help stretch limited funding as far as possible and bolster efforts to address shared state and local climate resiliency goals. For these reasons, the City of Laguna Niguel supports AB 972 (Maienschein) and urges the passage of this important measure.

Sincerely,



Kelly Jennings

Mayor

City of Laguna Niguel

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations